

RAIN REMINDER



Today it was gray and it rained. And rained. And rained. Big, fat drops of heavy rain. It looked great falling from the sky. It looked to me like it was falling in straight lines and reminded me of those curtains people make out of fake stringed pearls. It sounded great too, like rushing rapids. I never really took much notice of how much noise rain makes. I never appreciated how cleansing it sounds. It seems weird to think of a sound as cleansing. But that's how rain sounds if you listen to it from a place of appreciation rather than annoyance that your feet might get wet and you're probably going to lose your 14th umbrella at some bus stop or restaurant.

My hometown has a world-renowned reputation for being one of the soggiest places on earth. It's a favorite complaint amongst the people who live here. When I was in high school it rained once for more than 40 days straight. The water comes down the streets in waves. Your feet do get wet. The weather forecast for entire summers is often summed up in a word: rain. But then we get a brilliant day of sunshine and it's so beautiful all is instantly forgiven.

That's how it used to be anyway. A woman I know who immigrated here from Eastern Europe five years ago asked me why people say it always rains here. She's baffled because since she's been here, rain has been a scattered shower once in awhile. The summers have been especially hot and dry. Last summer there was a horrendous fire in a populated metropolitan area surrounded by tinder dry forests. The general feeling was the entire great outdoors was ready to go up in smoke. Lightning became a scary word. Cigarettes became a super hazard. Campfires were banned in the parks they didn't close.

I always say that if there is reincarnation I want to come back as an iguana and lie on a rock in the Galapagos and soak up the rays all day. I love dry, warm days of blue sky and sunshine. I have many times said that 365 of them a year would suit me fine. But after today I might revise that. When we did get a dribble of rain this summer friends of mine who live to garden would look outside with a worried look and say something like "I don't think it's going to be much." Countless former complainers had changed their tune. "We need rain," they said. Even I, the sun bunny, felt sad when I looked at the distressed trees in my neighborhood. You could hear their unhappiness in the dry rustle they made when the winds came up and you could see it in the curled, lusterless leaves.

Well today we got rain. Lots of rain. The kind of rain that we're famous for. And it was great. It's just so true that the times that seem barren are really just periods of pause that in the end bring us new appreciation, expanded capacity for feeling and expressing gratitude and deeper understanding of the wondrous complexity of life. Sometimes, in the midst of whatever drought we may be going

through in our lives, turmoil and anxiety make it hard to remember that.
Thankfully, we have the ability to remind ourselves.

And if we don't, eventually the rain will.

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